

Resolution No.:	17-564
Introduced:	October 9, 2012
Adopted:	October 16, 2012

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND**

By: Councilmembers Ervin, Andrews, Floreen, Elrich, Leventhal, Navarro, Rice, Riemer
and Council President Berliner

SUBJECT: Establishment of Food Recovery Work Group

Background

1. The current economic crisis has forced more people than ever before to ask for public assistance. In 2012, the self-sufficiency standard, which is the minimum income families require to achieve financial security, for a family of four in Montgomery County is approximately \$82,877.
2. According to Montgomery County's Self-Sufficiency Standard, a single adult must pay \$256 per month for food to sustain himself or herself on a low-cost diet, which is based solely on home-cooked meals. For a family of four this cost is estimated at \$802 per month.
3. In 2011, the food index on the U.S. Consumer Price Index rose 4.4 percent. Federal officials expect grocery prices to increase by 3 to 4 percent overall in 2012. These prices are dramatically higher than 2009 and 2010, when food-price inflation was the lowest since the 1960s. For example, in 2011, meat, coffee, and peanut butter prices rose 9 percent, 19 percent and 27 percent respectively, and corn prices hit a record high of \$8 per bushel.
4. The Capital Area Food Bank reports that 40 percent of its clients must choose between food and other necessities like housing, utilities, medical care and transportation.
5. Low-income children are at the greatest risk of food insecurity. Often the meals that they receive lack the vitamins and nutrients essential for their development, which can have a dramatic impact on student achievement. This problem is ever increasing, as approximately one-third of Montgomery County students currently qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs), a poverty indicator and a figure that may be higher due to underreporting.

6. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, in 2010 more than 34 million tons of food waste was generated in the United States. This is larger than any other category except paper. Food waste accounted for almost 14 percent of the total municipal solid waste stream. Less than 3 percent of the food waste was reused or recycled and the rest was thrown away, which makes food waste the single largest component of the materials reaching landfills and incinerators.
7. In 2011, 19 percent of Montgomery County's waste stream was made up of food. The amount of food waste produced by the non-residential sector includes restaurants which accounted for 28,769 tons, supermarkets which produced 14,014 tons, and Montgomery County Public Schools which generated 5,301 tons.
8. Student volunteers at the University of Maryland, College Park have created a successful model of food redistribution called the Food Recovery Network. This group redistributes food that would otherwise be wasted to those in need. As of May 2012, the organization donated more than 30,000 meals from University of Maryland. After starting three other chapters at colleges across the United States, the organization is becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission of replicating the model in other communities. In addition, many cities have food recovery programs, such as the D.C. Central Kitchen in Washington D.C. and City Harvest in New York City.
9. A food recovery effort should be created in Montgomery County to provide our low-income residents with assistance and to bolster our non-profit community partners who focus on issues associated with hunger.
10. A Council Work Group is necessary to evaluate the costs associated with creating a food recovery effort and to develop a strategic action plan for implementation. This group would also evaluate best practices; map existing resources; identify ways to enhance communication among non-profit organizations, service providers, and food suppliers; and recommend any needed legislative changes to assist in these efforts.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County Maryland approves the following resolution:

1. The Council will appoint a Food Recovery Work Group.
2. The Work Group must consist of no more than 21 members and include representatives from: the Department of Health and Human Services; the Office of Community Partnerships; the Agricultural Services Division of the Department of Economic Development; the Food Council; Montgomery County Public Schools; Manna Food Center; the Maryland Restaurant Association; non-profit organizations; local faith-based institutions, farms, supermarkets, universities, and advocacy groups focusing on gardening, nutrition or ending hunger.

3. The Work Group must develop a report detailing how to create and implement a food recovery effort in Montgomery County.
4. The Work Group must submit a report to the Council that specifies recommended action steps and costs associated with creating a food recovery effort in Montgomery County. The report should also evaluate best practices; map existing resources; identify ways to enhance communication among non-profit organizations, service providers, and food suppliers; and recommend any needed legislative changes to assist in these efforts.
5. The Work Group must submit its interim report to the Council by March 31, 2013 and a final report by July 1, 2013.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council